

Mt. Sterling Advocate.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL, IDENTICAL IN INTEREST WITH ITS OWN PEOPLE.

VOLUME XVII

MT. STERLING, KENTUCKY, WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1908.

NUMBER 44

"SABBATH OBSERVANCE."

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union observed April 27 to May 2 in this city as the week of prayer every afternoon from three to four o'clock, which were well attended and with profit. Each leader handled their subject in an able and forceful way. Subject: "Sabbath Observance," closed the services Saturday afternoon. Mrs. B. F. Thomson gave such a splendid paper bearing on the subject that we want to give it to others:

"SABBATH DESECRATION SAPPING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER."

The Sabbath seems to be of the most ancient origin. Apparently it was instituted along with marriage with Adam and Eve. In the ten commandments we have "Remember the Sabbath Day," showing its previous existence. Recent research proves the interesting fact that before Abraham's day the Babylonians ended their week of seven days with a day of rest, strictly observed and called the Sabbath by Assyrian writers. It was certainly a well-known institution before the giving of the law of Sinai. It was after the laws of prohibition and the penalties were given. With Christ the spiritual superseded the ceremonial and mechanical. God ordained marriage and the Sabbath in the beginning. In the giving of the commandments it was enjoined to remember it as a thing already binding on the conscience. The provision of a double supply of manna and its usual preservation indicates familiarity with it on the part of Israel. There has never been an abrogation of this law. Jesus certainly did not abolish it, but taught men how to properly utilize it. Being an example in all things He shows how the Sabbath is to be kept. It has been encumbered with traditional rubbish and there was more concern for ceremonial observance of it than the enjoyment of a rest for spiritual contemplation. To shut up shop and sit in doors doing nothing is not keeping the Sabbath. Nor is there any virtue in observing idly that Day which men call now the seventh day. No man can tell with certainty the real sequence of sevens from the beginning. The commandments respect one day in seven, or a seventh day, after six days of labor. "Remember the Sabbath Day," is the message and voice of our Father—yours and mine—and full of the tender yearning love; of His great heart for his children. Created in His likeness, and redeemed by His love. He knows our proneness to forget, and so in one form or in another He gives the message repeatedly. He first gave it in Eden where He set the example of resting after six days of work, and better still laid His quieting hand on His eager children to whom the world with its beauty was new and attractive, and set apart for them the first day of their married life and each weekly return of the day for quiet intercourse with Him which should keep them mindful of their high birth and destiny, and full of love for their Father. So God blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it forever. Later the message was written by God's own hand on stone tablets that it might be preserved among the nation's treasures. It was thundered on Sinai that it might echo around the world with the majesty and authority of the King of Kings. In bondage and captivity as well as in the land of Promise. The Prophet continually reminded the chosen people that the Sabbath was sacred to God, a sign by the observance which His people should always know, their loyalty to Him be

tested, and their security and prosperity be assured. When the Son of God came and found His rest day an unspeakable burden He restored it to its rightful place, the day pre-eminently "made for man" to save him from tyranny and provide for the needs of his soul the crown of his life, the day hallowed and blessed for rest and worship. In these crowded and restless days in which we live when the Sabbath is more than ever needed and more than ever practically forgotten, then comes to each of us the command, the very words of which are full of entreaty, "Remember the Sabbath," it is as though the heart of God was filled with compassion for the world, because it is missing the sweetness and grandeur of life by being ground down by unceasing toil, or corroded by constant cares and friction, or crushed by selfishness, and He says, "Remember the Sabbath," and what it can do for you, embrace it and let it lead you to peace and gladness to God and Heaven. To do this we must stem the current. The pressure against Sabbath keeping increases as self-indulgence increases, as we get farther away from the simple living of our fathers the voice of conscience is more and more stifled, buried under conventionalities, luxuries and gayeties. Prof. Austin Phelps says, "The decline of religion in the family commonly begins with the relaxation of Sabbath law. The juniors plead for greater freedom and profess more liberal opinions. Miscellaneous reading, absence from public worship, indulgence in secular recreation, license in traveling on the Lord's Day are justified on the grounds of change in the times. Ancient ways are stigmatized as narrow. Christian example is adduced to support anti-Christian innovation. The plea is plausible. Children on the verge of manhood and womanhood are enticed by it into dangerous relaxation of christian principles. This wish for much so-called liberty is revolutionary, conscience is crippled and goes on crutches thereafter."

Cannon Farrar writes, "The waste and selfish desecration of the Sabbath, and the flinging away of its golden opportunities is, I believe, to thousands of youth the first step in the downward course of moral degeneracy and spiritual death." God knows those who honor His day even at great personal sacrifice, and no man or woman who close their place of business on the Sabbath is certain, other things being equal to secure in the long run, the best financial success, though his faith is some-

times long tested, and some accounts are left to be squared in the next world, but the Lord is a sure pay-master, and He says, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath." Would that all wage-earners would learn and receive this offered blessing. Sisters, home-makers and society molders, oft times, well nigh distracted with ceaseless problems and burdens of life needing the rest that seldom comes, upon you the Master urges "Remember the Sabbath," and make it a day of blessed rest. Do not, I beg, countenance Sunday visiting and receptions that make it for many a day of social dissipation. Refuse to give place to the Sunday newspaper, furnish a simple dinner, remembering if you have help with what zealous care God guards their rights. They may not use the Day as you approve, but can you not win their confidence and teach them how to use it, remembering in any event God commands you to give them rest? Set your faces resolutely against all Sunday desecration, and make it a sweet attractive home day for husband and children with sacred music, rest and talk mingled, and whether you be a christian or not remember it is a sacred day and accustom the family to attend church and Sabbath School regularly, yourself leading, not sending them. As a nation we are at the parting of the ways, the line is being drawn not between the church and the world but between the conscientious and the patriotic who use the day aright. Refuse to employ labor, to patronize the public and government desecrators (the railroads, post-office and Sunday papers) or to demand that freight or mail shall be transported to them on the Sabbath, and the larger class in the church and out who put pleasure, convenience and money-making before God's law of the Sabbath; on which are we? There is increased interest in this question, and the tide of public sentiment is rising, and yet, the whole trend of affairs is towards a complete secularization of the day. In that way the Jewish nation went down as God foretold, and that way leads to disaster for us. Upon christian business men the responsibility largely rests because they to so great an extent control legislation, and exert so wide an influence, and yet, every voter, every christian and every patriot has a duty to the public that may not be shirked, and each of us will find our own lives and those of our own dear ones helped or marred according to our treatment of the fourth commandment, Exodus, 20-8-11, "Remember the Sabbath

Day to Keep It Holy," &c. Isaiah 58-13-14, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath from doing thy pleasure on the holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy Father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

To take an economical view of Sunday the need of one day's rest in every seven is now being generally recognized by the more intelligent observers everywhere. Employers and employed alike are coming to the recognition of the fact that in the long run more work can be done in six days than in seven. The reduction of the principles to practice, however, halts because of certain temptations. The workmen find it difficult to resist the allurements of another day's pay in addition to his scanty income, not realizing the heavy price he must pay for it. The employer, especially in the present state of the labor market, is under temptation to keep the wheels of production in constant motion, discarding the exhausted workman as he would any other worn-out tool, and supplying his place with a fresh one. The weekly rest day is a proper subject for legislation and a desirable end to accomplish, but it cannot fully supply the need of the present day. That need cannot be met only by a Sunday, a day of worship as well as of rest. Worship cannot be forced by legislation. The right to the necessary leisure may and should be secured by well enforced laws. The worship itself must be the result of individual conviction. The day of worship well observed means character and intellect. It means a deeper sense of obligation, a higher sense of duty, a finer sense of honor. On the intellectual side it means greater keenness and comprehensiveness, larger powers of initiative and greater industrial efficiency of every sort. The American workman is the best paid in the world, and at the same time the cheapest of his superior personal qualities. To these personal qualities the American Sunday has made a very great contribution. Abolish the American Sunday and you go far to put the American working man on a level with the continental working man, with his continental Sunday. There is but one thing more brutalizing than

seven days labor a week the world round, that is six day's labor and one day's rest devoted to the pleasure of sense alone. If American workmen would preserve and improve their high standing and condition of comfort they will do well to make a wise and provident use of Sunday. It is their most valuable asset. It can be wasted only at the expense of character and earning power. These considerations are as true of the employer as of the employed. The conditions of modern business are exacting and hardening. Business men need all the power of brain and nerve which they can command in order to keep their place in the industrial world. Brains like body need rest and change of activity. Sunday spent over the mail and the newspaper in thought about the same things which occupy other days of the week, empty of things which enlarge the mental horizon and furnish material for new thought is not a day of recreation, and is sapping christian character. It does not send a man back to his counting-room with strengthened brain and softened heart, with new grasp of business problem, and larger consideration of human life. It only adds new weight to the burden which commercializes a man, hardens him into insensibility to any but selfish and material consideration and finally break him down from "overwork." No business men are too busy to go to church, most business men are too busy not to go. We feel a sacred delight in observing the first day of

the week as our Sabbath, because we are enabled in that way by habitual and universal concert of action to attest our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. We are all the bolder in doing this because we know that apostolic Saints observed and called it the Lord's Day. We maintain that the purposes of the Christian Sabbath are identical with those of the seventh day as kept by the children of Israel with the difference that the christian has more freedom in his method of observing it. But they still hold that it ought to be kept by laying aside the common work of the week and making it a day of rest from secular toil. They believe that it ought to be devoted to holy service in honor of Christ. Paul preached the gospel at Troas on the first day of the week. It was on the first day of the week that the Disciples held their first meeting after the Lord's death. The Corinthian Christians made their offering on the first day of the week. Our Master taught that He was the Lord of the Sabbath He instituted. He taught also that men were not mere machines to keep the Sabbath but it was made for man and the early christians seemed to feel quite free as to the things they did on the Sabbath. This does not mean that they trifled with the Sabbath or used it for their own purpose, to use the day in the manner in which they could best advance the kingdom of Christ. This is quite different

[Continued on Eighth Page]

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